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ABSTRACT

The Offer Self Image Questionnaire measures adolescent personality and adjustment from a psychodynamic perspective. It has been used by many investigators who administered the test to a large variety of teenage populations, and has significantly differentiated between normal, delinquent and disturbed populations; males and females; younger and older adolescents; rural and urban samples and different subgroups within the American culture. Analysis of data collected in the United States, Australia, Ireland, and Israel, and the significant cultural differences, are reported here. (BW)

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THE SELF-IMAGE OF ADOLESCENTS:

A STUDY OF FOUR CULTURES

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INTRODUCTION

The Self-Image Questionnaire is a self-descriptive personality test that can be used for measuring the self-system of teenage boys and girls between the ages of 13 and 18. The self-system is directly correlated with the mental health and adjustment of adolescents (Offer and Howard, 1972; Offer, Marohn and Ostrov, 1975). It measures adjustment in eleven content areas which are considered important in the psychological world of the teenager. The questionnaire was originally developed to provide an objective, reliable means for the selection of a representative group of modal or "normal" adolescents from a larger group of high school students (Offer and Sabshin, 1963; Offer, 1969). The questionnaire has since been used in many studies and has been administered to over 10,000 teenagers in the United States, Australia, Ireland and Israel. The populations included males and females, younger and older teenagers, normal, disturbed and delinquent adolescents, urban and suburban, in 30 different metropolitan centers. The samples cover the range of the middle class, but has recently been given to rural, ghetto, and lower class teenagers.

Our particular operational approach rests on two major

assumptions. First, it is necessary to evaluate the adolescent's functioning in multiple areas since he can master one aspect of his world while failing to adjust in another. Second, the psychological sensitivity of the adolescent is sufficiently acute to allow us to utilize his self-description as a basis for reliable selection of subgroup. (Ostrov, Offer, and Maroh, 1972).

DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Items were written to cover eleven areas which were felt, on the basis of theoretical propositions, clinical experience, and a review of empirical findings with other scales and instruments to be important to the internal psychological life of the teenager. These are areas in which the need for the teenager to function adaptively is crucial. The eleven areas and the number of items originally included for each are:

Scale Number	Area	Number of Items
S 1	Impulse Control	10
S 2	Emotional Tone	10
S 3	Body and Self-Image	10
S 4	Social Attitudes	10
S 5	Morals	10
S 7	Family Relations	20
S 8	External Mastery	10

S 9	Vocational & Educational Goals	10
S 10	Psychopathology	15
S 11	Superior Adjustment	15
STS	(Total Score)	120
S 6	Sexual Attitudes	10

A number of items were written to fit specifically into each of these categories. In the development of the questionnaire we relied, in part, on Engel's (1959) Q-sort and on our own Q-sort developed for another study (Marcus et al., 1966). The writing of many items was also influenced by the following works: N. Garmezy, A. R. Clarke and C. Stochner (1957), J. S. Coleman (1961), G. Gardner (1959), H. A. Murray (1939), R. F. Peck (1958), S. K. Polka (1954), H. L. Raush and B. Sweet (1961), W. R. Rosengren (1961) and E. J. Shoben (1949), E. Silber, et al. (1961). The resulting items and scales were checked for clarity and meaningfulness in discussions with several teenagers. Next a pilot study was carried out with a sample of 40 teenage boys (10 psychiatric patients and 30 high school students). As a result some items were rewritten and others replaced.

The questionnarie was administered in the Fall of 1962, to two freshmen classes in two different high schools, near

Chicago. A group of average, or normal students was selected from amidst the total population. We defined a normal student as one whose answers on the Offer Self-Image Questionnaire fell within one standard deviation from the mean in at least nine of the eleven scales. One hundred and thirteen students were selected from a total of 356 students who took the test. The students selected have been part of an on-going study on normative adolescent behavior for the past eight years (see Offer, 1969 and Offer and Offer, 1975). The questionnaire has since been used by many investigators who administered the test to a large variety of teenager populations. It has significantly differentiated between normal, delinquent and disturbed populations; males and females; younger (13-15 years) and older (16-18 years) adolescents; rural and urban samples and different subgroups within the American culture. We want to document the above in the findings below, and in addition, share with you our new finding concerning the difference between the self-image of American, Australian, Irish and Israeli adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

Between 1962 and 1976, Offer Self-Image Questionnaire data were collected by many investigators from predominantly middle class adolescents from Australia, Ireland, Israel and diverse areas in the United States. Within the United States, data were gathered on adolescents in suburban and urban public schools, adolescents referred or committed for delinquency and adolescents evincing depression, suicidal or psychotic behavior but not delinquency. Comparisons were made among these data by combining samples into "normal," "disturbed" and "delinquent" categories separately by sex, age and country of origin. Specifically, subjects from public schools not otherwise identified as delinquent or disturbed were categorized as normal; delinquents comprised adolescents institutionalized for mild or severe delinquent behavior; the disturbed groups consisted of adolescents from out-patient clinics and inpatient settings not identified as delinquent. In practice, data on delinquent and disturbed subjects were available only from American subjects; all the Australian subjects were younger (13-15 years old), all the Israeli subjects were older (16-18 years old). Therefore, three sets of analyses were run: one compared younger and older, male and female and normal, delinquent and disturbed American subjects. A second compared younger, male and female,

American, Australian and Irish subjects, a third compared older, male and female American, Irish and Israel subjects.

The statistical method used for these comparisons was univariate two-way and three-way analyses of variance. To meet homogeneity of variance assumptions, equal sample sizes were used for each analysis of variance. Equal N's were obtained by retaining all the subjects in the smallest cell in any one analysis and then retaining on a random basis that number of subjects from the larger pool of subjects in each of the other cells in the analysis. Thus, in the two-way analyses of variance comparing male and female, American Australian and Irish younger adolescents, the smallest cell comprised around 100 subjects. The same number of subjects were randomly drawn from each of the remaining five cells (male American, female American, male Australian, female Australian, female Irish) and used in the ANOVA. The dependent variables for these analyses were the eleven scale scores of the OSIQ and the Total Score.

To further test the null hypotheses, the two-way and three-way analyses of variance were repeated two more times using different random samples from the layer cells. In this way, for example, the male and female, American, Australian and Irish younger adolescents were compared three times along each dependent variable in three separate two-way

analyses of variance. The null hypotheses were considered rejected only if probability levels were below the .05 level for all three analyses.

The O.S.I.Q. was written in such a way that the higher the score the more poorly adjusted in the area described by the scale in question; the scale for each item runs from 1 (describes me very well) to 6 (does not describe me at all); the total score is the sum of scale means across all scales except the Sexual Attitude Scale; number given in the mean scale score across subjects in all three separate analyses combined; therefore numbers of subjects are three times larger than for any one analysis; probability levels for each of the three separate analyses are given separately.

RESULTS

As seen in tables # 1,2 the O.S.I.Q. differentiates significantly between a random sample of normal adolescent males or females, young and old and a contrasted sample of delinquents and emotionally disturbed. This is true for all scales the total score, except Scale #6 (Sexual Attitudes and Behavior). In the comparison between the delinquent and the emotionally disturbed, the former have a healthier self-image than the latter. This was again true for all scales except the Sexual Attitude and Behavior Scale (Scale #6).

In tables # 3 and 4 we are comparing male vs. females across culture. Table # 3 has the younger , Table #4 the older. They are all normal adolescents.

Scale #1 male healthier than female

Scale #5 female healthier than male

Scale #6 male healthier than female

These three scales are significant in all six analyses. For older adolescents female and male are more similar in their self-image profile than younger adolescents.

Tables #5 and 6 show that Americans see themselves as being healthier consistently (males, female, younger and older) in scales 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11 and Total Score. For the younger teenagers Americans describe themselves as healthier in Scale #6. The older, American teenagers see themselves as being healthier in scales #4, #7 and #9 and least healthy in Scale #6.

Table #7 (younger) demonstrate that young Irish normal male adolescents are more similar to their female counterparts, than was the case for Americans and Australians in regard to Scale #3. Scales 4, 7, 8 and 9 demonstrate that young American and Irish females see themselves as healthier; for the Australians, the opposite is true.

For older adolescents, (Table #8) shows that American and Irish females have a healthier self-image than the males, whereas Israeli males have a healthier self-image than females in regards to scales #5 and 7. Scale 6, all males healthier than females but the difference is least for Americans. In the other cultures (Irish and Israeli) there are more polarities between the sexes, i.e. males are more "liberal" than females in their sexual attitudes and behavior.

DISCUSSION

With the exception of the Sexual Attitudes and Behavior Scale (Scale #6), we have demonstrated that when race, sex and age are controlled for the O.S.I.Q can differentiate significantly between normal, delinquent and emotionally disturbed adolescents. We are planning to see whether this difference holds in other cultures as well.

We are aware that there are many methodological limitations in a study such as ours. The instrument was constructed and validated in the United States on a middle class teenage population. How valid these same items and scales are in another culture (even if they speak English) is open to question. The nuances that the meaning of words carry, and the meaning of taking such a questionnaire altogether might differ considerably in different cultures.

Because the results did seem to point to consistent differences and similarities between the few cultures, we might be allowed to share with you a few questions raised by the results. The American adolescents come across as healthier than the others. This may be an artifact which future studies will correct. The Australian teenagers have a closer self-image to the Americans, and the Israeli to the Irish. Is it because both Ireland and Israel have been undergoing continuous internal military-political battles? It would explain why both Irish and Israeli adolescents have a stronger moral commitment while being less sure of their future (in vocational, educational, mastery and coping point of view). The female teenagers in the United States have a lower self-esteem than the males, but the difference between the sexes is not as great as in the other three cultures. Is this finding as a result of the impact of the woman's liberation movement? The data are not conclusive but it will be of interest to follow this finding with more studies over the next decade in order to obtain more solid results.

FOOTNOTE

The study was undertaken when the senior author was a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford, California (1973-1974).

The following investigators shared with us their data on the O.S.I.Q.: In the United States we have utilized data of Dr. Offer's from public schools in two Chicago suburbs; Drs. S. Weissman and S. Bemesderfer from a public school in Chicago; Dr. H. Health from public schools in Chicago; Dr. E. Coché from a psychiatric hospital in Philadelphia; Dr. J. B McAndrew from a psychiatric hospital in Wisconsin; Mrs. J. Medak from an outpatient clinic in a Chicago suburb; Dr.W. H. Young from an outpatient clinic in Virginia; Drs. D. Offer, R. C. Marohn and E. Ostrov from a hospital program for juvenile delinquents; Dr. P. Agrawal from a correctional institution in California; Mr. M. Bogan from a facility for unwed mothers in Chicago; Mr. B. Fetrow from an Institution for the treatment of delinquents in Virginia; Dr. R. L. McGlenn from an institution for containing wards of the courts in San Diego; Drs. M. Robin and E. Silverstein from Chicago suburbs. In Ireland we obtained data from Dr. T. G. Brennan from a middle calss suburb near Dublin; In Israel, from Dr. E. Chigier's sample of "Youth Aliya" from a group near Tel-Aviv; In Australia

from Drs. A. G. Baikie, A. S. Henderson and I. L. Lewis; from the Island of Tasmania, the Australian Sample includes both private (Quaker) and public school samples.

Table one:

Comparison of Offer Self-Image Questionnaire Scale and Total Score Means: Normals vs. (Delinquent + Disturbed)/2 — Americans Only

Offer Self-Image Questionnaire Scale[2]	Normals[1]	Delinquent and Disturbed[1]	Probability levels Analysis #1	Analysis #2	Analysis #3
Scale one: Impulse Control	2.34	2.76	.0001	.001	.01
Scale two: Emotional Tone	2.33	2.90	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale three: Body & Self-Image	2.42	2.86	.0001	.001	.001
Scale four: Social Relationships	2.19	2.54	.01	.001	.05
Scale five: Morals	2.24	2.67	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale seven: Family Relationships	2.31	3.02	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale eight: Mastery of the External World	2.30	2.65	.0001	.0001	.001
Scale nine: Vocational-Educational Goals	1.87	2.25	.0001	.0001	.01
Scale ten: Psychopathology	2.32	2.81	.0001	.0001	.001
Scale eleven: Superior Adjustment	2.37	2.80	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale six: Sexual Attitudes	2.71	2.68	.58	.66	.38
Total Score	2.27	2.73	.0001	.0001	.0001

1. subjects were used in each of three analyses; the subjects were drawn in each analysis from a grand pool of
2. the higher the score, the less well adjusted

Table two:

Comparison of Offer Self-Image Questionnaire Scale and Total Score Means: Delinquent vs. Disturbed Subjects — Americans Only

Offer Self-Image Questionnaire Scale[2]	Delinquent[1]	Disturbed[1]	probability levels analysis one	analysis two	analysis three
Scale one: Impulse Control	2.65	2.87	.25	.05	.05
Scale two: Emotional Tone	2.75	3.04	.26	.01	.05
Scale three: Body & Self-Image	2.64	3.08	.01	.0001	.001
Scale four: Social Relationships	2.44	2.65	.64	.01	.10
Scale five: Morals	2.65	2.71	.56	.76	.25
Scale seven: Family Relationships	2.84	3.20	.001	.05	.05
Scale eight: Mastery of the External World	2.51	2.85	.01	.001	.05
Scale nine: Vocational-Educational Goals	2.07	2.42	.01	.001	.01
Scale ten: Psychopathology	2.69	2.93	.27	.001	.11
Scale eleven: Superior Adjustment	2.66	2.94	.01	.001	.01
Scale six: Sexual Attitudes	2.54	2.83	.12	.001	.01
Total Score	2.59	2.87	.01	.001	.01

1. subjects were used in each of three analyses; the subjects were drawn in each analysis from a grand pool of
2. the higher the score, the less well-adjusted

Table three: Main Effect

Cross-cultural Comparison of Offer Self-Image Questionnaire Scale and Total Score Means: Male vs. Female Subjects from America, Australia, and Ireland — Young (13-15 year old) Normal Adolescents Only

Offer Self-Image Questionnaire Scale[2]	Male[1]	Female[1]	probability levels analysis one	analysis two	analysis three
Scale one: Impulse Control	2.43	2.65	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale two: Emotional Tone	2.33	2.55	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale three: Body & Self-Image	2.59	2.81	.001	.0001	.0001
Scale four: Social Relationships	2.39	2.35	.36	.15	.75
Scale five: Morals	2.57	2.34	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale seven: Family Relationships	2.48	2.28	.0001	.0001	.001
Scale eight: Mastery of the External World	2.51	2.49	.58	.20	.99
Scale nine: Vocational-Educational Goals	2.12	1.98	.001	.0001	.001
Scale ten: Psychopathology	2.46	2.63	.0001	.001	.0001
Scale eleven: Superior Adjustment	2.60	2.64	.56	.81	.05
Scale six: Sexual Attitudes	2.54	2.99	.0001	.0001	.0001
Total Score	2.45	2.47	.38	.73	.05

1. subjects were used in each of three analyses; the subjects were drawn in each analysis from a grand pool of
2. the higher the score, the less well-adjusted

Table four: Main Effect

Cross-cultural Comparison of Offer Self-Image Questionnaire Scale and Total Score Means:

Male vs Female Subjects from America, Ireland, and Israel—Older (16-18 yr.) Normal Adolescents Only

Offer Self-Image Questronnaire Scale[2]	Male[1]	Female[1]	probability levels: 2 df analysis #1	analysis #2	analysis #3
Scale one: Impulse Control	2.34	2.57	.05	.001	.001
Scale two: Emotional Tone	2.39	2.56	.07	.07	.05
Scale three: Body & Self-Image	2.54	2.62	.39	.41	.10
Scale four: Social Relationships	2.30	2.20	.20	.16	.18
Scale five: Morals	2.47	2.27	.01	.01	.001
Scale seven: Family Relationships	2.33	2.26	.22	.25	.40
Scale eight: Mastery of the External World	2.43	2.44	.94	.36	.69
Scale nine: Vocational-Educational Goals	2.03	1.99	.85	.40	.29
Scale ten: Psychopathology	2.38	2.51	.22	.05	.05
Scale eleven: Superior Adjustment	2.51	2.48	.49	.58	.55
Scale six: Sexual Attitudes	2.51	2.86	.0001	.0001	.0001
Total Score	2.37	2.59	.98	.64	.61

1. subjects were used in each of three analyses; the subjects were drawn in each analysis from a grand pool of

2. higher the score, the less well-adjusted

Table five: Main Effect

Cross-cultural Comparison of Offer Self-Image Questionnaire Scale and Total Score Means: American vs. Australian vs Irish Subjects — Young (13-15 year old) Normal Adolescents Only

Offer Self-Image Questionnaire Scale[2]	Americans[1]	Australians[1]	Irish[1]	probability levels: Americans vs. others analysis 1	analysis 2	analysis 3
Scale one: Impulse Control	2.34	2.56	2.72	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale two Emotional Tone	2.36	2.45	2.52	.05	.05	.05
Scale three: Body & Self-Image	2.50	2.80	2.79	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale four: Social Relationships	2.33	2.36	2.42	.22	.23	.20
Scale five Morals	2.34	2.44	2.59	.01	.0001	.0001
Scale seven: Family Relationships	2.44	2.40	2.29	.23	.01	.05
Scale eight: Mastery of the External World	2.37	2.52	2.62	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale nine: Vocational-Educational Goals	2.04	2.01	2.09	.60	.51	.99
Scale ten: Psychopathology	2.35	2.59	2.70	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale eleven: Superior Adjustment	2.40	2.69	2.78	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale six Sexual Attitudes	2.67	2.75	2.88	.05	.001	.01
Total Score	2.35	2.48	2.52	.0001	.0001	.0001

1. subjects were used in each of three analyses; the subjects were drawn in each analysis from a grand pool of
2. higher the score, less well-adjusted

Table six: Main Effect

Cross-cultural Comparison of Offer Self-Image Questionnaire Scale and Total Scale Means: Irish vs Israeli vs. American Subjects — Older (16-18 year old) Normal Adolescents Only

Offer Self-Image Questionnaire Scale [2]	Americans [1]	Irish [1]	Israeli [1]	probability levels: Americans vs. others analysis #1	Americans vs. others analysis #2	Americans vs. others analysis #3
Scale one: Impulse Control	2.29	2.51	2.57	.01	.001	.01
Scale two: Emotional Tone	2.31	2.46	2.64	.01	.01	.01
Scale three: Body & Self-Image	2.35	2.74	2.65	.0001	.001	.0001
Scale four: Social Relationships	2.03	2.41	2.31	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale five: Morals	2.10	2.51	2.51	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale seven: Family Relationships	2.03	2.39	2.47	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale eight: Mastery of the External World	2.22	2.62	2.47	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale nine: Vocational-Educational Goals	1.72	2.07	2.34	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale ten: Psychopathology	2.35	2.52	2.46	.05	.05	.05
Scale eleven: Superior Adjustment	2.36	2.69	2.44	.01	.0001	.01
Scale six: Sexual Attitudes	2.80	2.52	2.73	.01	.05	.01
Total Score	2.18	2.49	2.48	.0001	.0001	.001

1. subjects were used in each of three analyses; the subjects were drawn in each analysis from a grand pool of
2. higher the score, less well-adjusted.

Table seven: Interaction Sex x (American vs Australians vs Irish)
Cross-cultural Comparison of Offer Self-Image Questionnaire Scale and Total Score Means:
American vs. Australian vs Irish Males and Females — Young (13-15 year old) Normal Adolescents Only

Offer Self-Image Questionnaire Scale[2]	Americans[1]		Australians[1]		Irish[1]		probability levels: 1 degrees of freedom		
	male	female	male	female	male	female	analysis #1	analysis #2	analysis #3
Scale one: Impulse Control	2.18	2.51	2.44	2.68	2.68	2.76	.26	.01	.10
Scale two: Emotional Tone	2.25	2.47	2.27	2.63	2.47	2.56	.05	.30	.001
Scale three: Body & Self-Image	2.32	2.69	2.67	2.93	2.77	2.81	.01	.001	.001
Scale four: Social Relationships	2.39	2.27	2.27	2.45	2.50	2.34	.01	.05	.001
Scale five: Morals	2.48	2.20	2.55	2.33	2.68	2.50	.54	.40	.43
Scale seven: Family Relationships	2.70	2.18	2.34	2.46	2.39	2.20	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale eight: Mastery of the External World	2.44	2.29	2.46	2.59	2.64	2.59	.001	.05	.05
Scale nine: Vocational-Educational Goals	2.25	1.83	1.98	2.04	2.12	2.07	.0001	.0001	.0001
Scale ten: Psychopathology	2.27	2.43	2.48	2.70	2.63	2.76	.18	.53	.86
Scale eleven: Superior Adjustment	2.35	2.44	2.64	2.73	2.82	2.74	.10	.06	.01
Scale six: Sexual Attitudes	2.41	2.93	2.50	3.00	2.72	3.03	.05	.32	.12
Total Score	2.36	2.33	2.41	2.55	2.57	2.53	.001	23	.01

1. subjects were used in each of three analyses; the subjects were drawn in each analysis from a grand pool of
2. higher the score, less well-adjusted

Table eight: Interaction Sex x (Americans vs. Irish vs. Israeli)
Cross-cultural Comparison of Offer Self-Image Questionnaire Scale and Total Score Means:
American vs Irish vs Israeli Males and Females — Older (16-18 year old) Normal Adolescents Only

Offer Self-Image Questionnaire Scale[2]	American[1]		Irish[1]		Israeli[1]		probability levels: 2 degrees of freedom		
	male	female	male	female	male	female	analysis #1	analysis #2	analysis #3
Scale one: Impulse Control	2.17	2.41	2.42	2.60	2.44	2.70	.66	.72	.57
Scale two: Emotional Tone	2.26	2.37	2.43	2.50	2.48	2.81	.25	.42	.23
Scale three: Body & Self-Image	2.34	2.37	2.71	2.76	2.57	2.73	.64	.46	.46
Scale four: Social Relationships	2.06	2.00	2.49	2.34	2.35	2.27	.98	.90	.53
Scale five: Morals	2.26	1.94	2.71	2.30	2.45	2.56	.001	.05	.001
Scale seven: Family Relationships	2.14	1.92	2.55	2.23	2.32	2.62	.001	.01	.001
Scale eight: Mastery of the External World	2.20	2.24	2.67	2.57	2.43	2.52	.71	.71	.08
Scale nine: Vocational-Educational Goals	1.77	1.67	2.07	2.08	2.26	2.25	.88	.20	.86
Scale ten: Psychopathology	2.28	2.41	2.44	2.61	2.43	2.50	.75	.50	.54
Scale eleven: Superior Adjustment	2.39	2.33	2.75	2.63	2.39	2.48	.17	.73	.08
Scale six: Sexual Attitudes	2.75	2.86	2.33	2.71	2.45	3.01	.01	.05	.05
Total Score	2.19	2.17	2.52	2.46	2.41	2.54	.19	.44	.07

1. subjects were used in each of three analyses; the subjects were drawn in each analysis from a grand pool of
2. higher the score, less well-adjusted